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2020 VISION

In June 2000, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen Henry H. Shelton, published *Joint Vision 2020* (JV 2020) with the goal of recasting the existing Joint Vision to better prepare the armed forces of the United States for the future.¹ Critics assert that JV 2020 lacks the analytical focus needed to guide the necessary transformation of the US military in order to meet the security challenges of the 21st century.²

In this paper, I intend to show that JV 2020 is an indispensable document that succeeds in its purpose in four key areas. First, it provides continuity to the armed forces' ongoing transformation process by building on key features of the original vision. Second, it accurately redefines the threats and challenges of the 21st century security environment. Third, it describes and links key strategic concepts and operational capabilities that are relevant to this new environment. Fourth, it outlines the way ahead for developing and implementing these capabilities.

¹ Dan Verton, "Pentagon Seeing 2020," Federal Computer Week (Jun 5, 2000): 1.

² Comments made by Martin Libicki of the Rand Corporation during an interview conducted by Federal Computer Week staff writers in June 2000.

The Importance of Vision

As a first step in accepting the merits of JV 2020, it is necessary to understand the role of a well-developed and effectively communicated vision within the context of organizational development. Organizational experts recognize that vision plays a key role in designing the future of an organization by serving as the front end of a strategy formulation process.³

While strategy provides the framework for getting to a desired end, vision provides the direction. A good strategy is indispensable in coordinating essential leadership and management decisions, but a strategy has cohesion and legitimacy only in the context of a clearly articulated and widely shared vision of the future. A strategy is only as good as the vision that guides it, which is why purpose and intentions - the basic components of vision - tend to be more powerful than plans in directing organizational behavior.⁴

Thus, the importance of a clearly articulated Joint Vision both to the armed forces and to those who develop national military strategy is readily apparent. A workable military

³ Burt Nanus, Visionary Leadership (San Francisco: Josey-Bass, 1992), 3.

⁴ Ibid., 30.

strategy, one that effectively relates ways and means with ends, depends heavily on the guiding direction that is provided by the Chairman's Vision.

Why a Joint Vision?

In order to judge the adequacy of JV 2020, it is important to understand its purpose. The purpose of the Joint Vision is to describe the operational concepts and capabilities anticipated of future joint forces. Additionally, the Joint Vision provides a conceptual template for conducting future military operations and establishes a common azimuth for the Services, combatant commands, Defense agencies, and Joint Staff as they develop plans and programs to transform the joint force to meet future warfighting requirements.⁵

As required input to the Joint Strategic Planning System, the Chairman's Joint Vision provides the services and joint commands with a single strategic direction for the conduct of future operations within the projected strategic environment.

The Joint Vision contains three key elements. First, it offers a long-range perspective and a common focal point for future planning while recommending concepts for operating within

⁵ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 3100.01A, (Washington DC: 1 Sep 1999), A-2.

the projected security environment. Second, it provides a conceptual template, or outline, for Service and combatant command visions. Third, it provides a means to study the implications of emerging threats, technologies, global changes, and their effects on joint doctrine, future force structures, requirements, and capabilities.⁶

Building on the Original Vision

In 1996, General John M. Shalikashvilli published the first Joint Vision, JV 2010, in response to the Commission on Roles and Missions of the Armed forces, which called for the CJCS to use his new powers under the Goldwater-Nichols Act to articulate a strategic vision for the Armed Forces. Focused primarily on operational forces and warfighting, JV 2010 introduced several key operational capabilities and stressed the importance of technological innovation. As the “original” vision, JV 2010 would become the foundation for legacy and supporting visions.

Following the publication of JV 2010, lessons learned from operations and experimentation, coupled with changes in the strategic security environment, demanded a modification to the original vision. The new chairman, General Shelton, intended to

⁶ Ibid., B-1 - B-2.

incorporate these lessons, while sustaining and building on the momentum of the joint vision process his predecessor had begun in order to continue the evolution of the joint force.⁷

In addition to extending the time frame to the second decade of the century, General Shelton recognized the need to emphasize the significance and impact of information operations while clarifying and addressing the full spectrum of "traditional" military operations. Further, he wanted to stress the predominance of alliance, coalition, interagency, and international organization operations, while addressing emerging challenges and opportunities with respect to these operations.⁸

In crafting the new vision, the Chairman revalidated the four key operational concepts (Dominant Maneuver, Precision Engagement, Focused Logistics, Full Dimension Protection) and critical enablers described in JV 2010 as well as their basic definitions.

There are a number of continuities between JV 2010 and JV 2020. The basic document structure of JV 2010 is found in JV 2020. Operational concepts received the most discussion, and the focus remains on operational forces. While JV 2020 expands

⁷ CJCS JV 2020 baseline brief found at www.dtic.mil.

⁸ Ibid.

on JV 2010 to address the full range of operations, warfighting remains the primary focus.

There are also a number of significant differences between the two visions. While JV 2010 described the strategic context in more broad terms, the strategic context outlined in JV 2020 was narrowed to three critical aspects: global interests, diffused technology, and adaptive enemies.

JV 2020 stresses the importance of information superiority and moves the emphasis of information operations beyond technology to all aspects of the employment of military force.

JV 2020 redefines the role of the US Joint Forces Command (JFCOM) as the lead executive agent for the joint warfighting experimentation program, and provides direction for the wide-ranging program of exercises and experimentation being conducted by the Services and combatant commands.

JV 2020 introduces Joint Command and Control as a key operational capability, taking into account the impact of information superiority resulting in increased choices for the commander, increased information at all levels, participation of multinational and interagency organizations, and new tools and procedures for commanders.⁹

⁹ Gen Henry H. Shelton, Joint Vision 2020 (Washington DC: GPO, June 2000), 31.

Finally, JV 2020 outlines a process for implementation that charts the course for taking the vision from concepts to capabilities through experimentation and development.

Redefining the Strategic Environment

JV 2020 accurately describes three aspects of the next two decades that have significant implications for the US Armed Forces. First, in terms of national security, the US will continue to have global interests and be engaged with a variety of regional actors. Second, potential adversaries will have access to the global commercial industrial base and much of the same technology as the US military. Third, and perhaps most significantly, potential adversaries will adapt as our capabilities evolve.

JV 2020 recognizes that in response to our technically advanced military capabilities, adversaries will develop and use asymmetric approaches to avoid our strengths and exploit vulnerabilities. The potential for such asymmetric attacks is the most serious danger the US faces in the immediate future. Most importantly, this danger includes long-range ballistic missiles, weapons of mass destruction, and other direct threats to US citizens and territory by a host of potential adversaries.

JV 2020 maintains that these asymmetric threats will continue to evolve and the US Armed Forces must maintain the flexibility and capability to deter, defend against, and defeat any adversary who chooses such an approach.

JV 2020 predicts significant threats to US infrastructure coinciding with anti-access campaigns and attacks on targets designed to erode American will. It sees numerous asymmetrical attacks by enemies with selective asymmetrical advantages over the US.

Finally, JV 2020 sees aggressive information operations and manipulation of the media against the US and its interests. It recognizes the essential strategic requirement of global reach and force projection. It understands that threats will extend from the homeland to the area of conflict, across the broad range in the spectrum of conflict, and an increased tempo and greater compression of time for execution.

Full Spectrum Dominance

In order to meet the threats and challenges of this new strategic environment, JV 2020 calls for the armed forces to be persuasive in peace, decisive in war, and preeminent in any form of conflict. The joint force, as envisioned in JV 2020, will

accomplish this aim by transforming and integrating key operational capabilities to achieve Full Spectrum Dominance.

JV 2020 defines Full Spectrum Dominance as the ability of US forces, operating unilaterally or in combination with multinational and interagency partners, to defeat any adversary and control any situation across the full range of military operations.¹⁰

Full Spectrum Dominance implies that US forces are able to conduct prompt, sustained, and synchronized operations with combinations of forces tailored to specific situations and with access to and freedom to operate in all domains; space, sea, land, air, and information. Full Spectrum Dominance reduces the effects of friction, the effects of danger and exertion, existence of uncertainty and chance, unpredictable actions of other actors, frailties of humans, machines, and information.

JV 2020 asserts that Full Spectrum Dominance is the product of the synergy of the core competencies of the individual Services, integrated into the joint team with information superiority, interoperability, and innovation being key enablers.

The main challenge to achieving Full Spectrum Dominance is in balancing cost and risk. Attaining Full Spectrum Dominance

¹⁰ Ibid., 6-7.

as envisioned by JV 2020 will be challenging and expensive as the services develop and fully integrate a wide array of service competencies and capabilities.

Concepts and Competencies

To achieve Full Spectrum Dominance, JV 2020 defines relevant operational concepts and effectively links them with enabling concepts and service competencies. Synergy between the key operational concepts of Dominant Maneuver, Precision Engagement, Focused Logistics, Full Dimensional Protection is achieved only through the co-evolution of joint doctrine, agile organizations, joint training, enhanced material and equipment, innovative leadership and education, high quality people, and requisite facilities. While the services have come a long way in reaching this goal, JV 2020 recognizes that the nation's armed forces must move beyond interoperability and become truly joint - intellectually, operationally, doctrinally, and technically.

Moving Toward the Joint Vision

JV 2020 explains the process from vision to concepts to experimentation to changes in doctrine, organization, training, material, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities (DOTMLPF). It builds upon three important implementing efforts that began with JV 2010. First, there is a common framework and language for the Services to develop and explain their unique contributions to the joint force. Second, a process is created to conduct joint experimentation and training to test ideas against practice. Finally, JV 2020 begins a process to manage the transformation of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities necessary to make the vision a reality.

JV 2020 continues the process that provides focus for the Joint Warfighting Experimentation Program, the Joint Vision Implementation Master Plan, The Requirements Generation System, and the Joint Experimentation Campaign Plans.

Conclusion

JV 2020 is based on the belief that in order for the armed force of the United States to be successful, the core competencies of the individual services must be brought together to create a truly joint force capable of full spectrum dominance across the range of military operations. The end result will be the evolution of the joint force, with a wide array of complementary and flexible capabilities, as the foundation of future US military operations.

JV 2020 is the next step in the Joint Vision process that successfully builds on the foundation and maintains the momentum established with JV 2010. This vision confirms the direction of the ongoing transformation of operational capabilities, and emphasizes the importance of further experimentation, exercises, analysis and conceptual thought, especially in the arenas of information operations, joint command and control, and multinational and interagency operations.

Still, simply articulating a vision statement is insufficient to affect the necessary transformation of the US Armed Forces without an effective and integrated plan for implementation. The development of such an implementation plan

can only take place as a coordinated effort that includes the services and CINCs working together to guide the decisions regarding requirements, programs, doctrine and training.

Critics question the relevance of JV 2020 by asserting that it fails to provide a clear enough picture of the future. Absent a more focused national strategy or an obvious threat such as the former Soviet Union, it may be impossible to write a better vision than that found in JV 2020.¹¹

¹¹ Verton, 3.